

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 9-19 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-6, 9, 11/1, and 14/1 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because of some informalities.

(a) Claims 1 and 5, at line 6, have been amended, as suggested by the Examiner, to overcome this rejection.

(b) Claim 1, at line 8, has been amended, as suggested by the Examiner, to overcome this rejection.

(c) Claim 5, at lines 10-12, has been amended, as suggested by the Examiner, to overcome this rejection.

(d) With regard to claim 6, the Examiner states that the “wherein the guiding passage is defined by a cap . . . and a hole which is provided at a position, on a side face of the cap, which exactly opposes the rupturable plate” limitation is unclear.

Claim 6 has been amended to overcome this rejection.

(e) With regard to claim 6, the Examiner states that the specification does not show support for Applicant’s embodiment 1 having a guiding passage.

Claim 5 is directed to the embodiment shown in Figs. 2 and 3. More specifically, the “guiding passage” corresponds to the cylindrical guide passage 40 shown in these drawings.

Therefore, claim 6, dependent on claim 5, has been amended so that it is now directed to the embodiments shown in Figs. 2 and 3 to overcome this rejection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

(a) Claims 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nanbu et al. (USP 6,676,157). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner alleges that Nanbu discloses all of the elements of the claimed invention (claim 5) including a “guide passage, disposed inside the diffuser portion, for guiding the rupturing energy discharged from the igniter.” Applicants respectfully disagree.

Nanbu discloses, in Fig. 4, an inflator having a container 10 and a diffuser portion connected to the container 10. A burst shim 14 is attached to an opening of the container 10 to prevent high-pressure gas charged inside the container 10 from discharging into the diffuser portion prior to activation of the inflator. The inflator also has as initiator 300 mounted on an initiator-mounting part 320 attached to the container 10, and also an L-shaped duct 340 disposed inside the container 10 such that gasses generated by the initiator 300 is guided directly towards the shim 16 upon activation of the inflator.

As stated in the foregoing, the L-shaped duct (corresponds to the “guide passage” of the claimed invention of the present invention) is disposed inside the container housing 10 (corresponds to the “cylindrical inflator housing”) and not “inside the diffuser portion” as required in claim 5. Accordingly, Nanbu fails to disclose or suggest the “guide passage” as recited in claim 5.

Claim 6, dependent on claim 5, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(b) Claims 10-13 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Horton et al. (USP 6,629,703). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With regard to claim 10, the Examiner alleges, in essence, that Horton discloses: a cylindrical inflator housing (10); a diffuser portion (30, 31); a gas discharge passage; and an igniter (3).

The Examiner, however, does not state that Horton also discloses the “igniter supporting portion.” In deed, Horton fails to disclose or suggest an element “provided in the diffuser” and reduces “a cross section of the gas discharge passage, such that the igniter supporting portion projects inwardly into the gas discharge passage more than an inner surface of the diffuser portion,” as required in claim 10. In Horton, the cross section of the gas discharge passage is reduced by a flow coupler 31, which the Examiner considers as the diffuser.

Accordingly, Horton fails to disclose or suggest the “igniter supporting portion” as recited in claim 10.

Claims 12, 13, and 15, variously on claim 10, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 10.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 14/10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Horton in view of Nanbu. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 14, dependent on claim 10, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 10.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 16-19 are allowable over the prior art of record.

Applicants also appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 1 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the Section 112 rejection(s), and also that claims 2-4, 9, and 11/1-15/1 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the Section 112 rejection(s) and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants believe that by the foregoing amendments to claim 1 to overcome the Section 112 rejections, claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-4, 9, and 11/1-15/1, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (#40,417) at the

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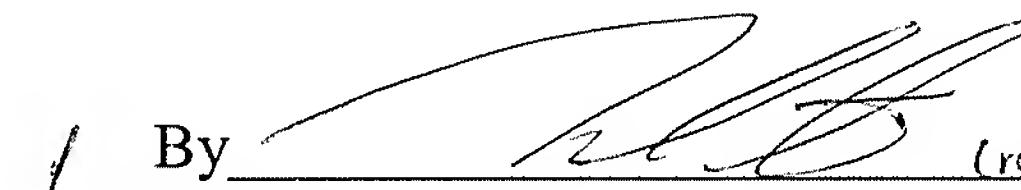
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telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: November 16, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

for 
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